

# Children, Youth & Family Consortium

## CYFC Monthly

### CYFC Monthly – November 2014

#### The Impact of Reoccurring Unintended Pregnancies on the Achievement Gap

Editor's note: The CYFC Community-Engaged Scholars Program is a four-year, multi-disciplinary, cohort-based initiative providing participants with a learning community and funding for community-engaged research. The program is intended to build participants' capacity for community-engaged scholarship (CES), benefit communities, contribute to knowledge about educational and health disparities, catalyze institutional support for CES, and of course — benefit communities. This year, CYFC Monthly is featuring essays from 2014-2017 scholars about their research projects. In this issue, we hear from Alysha Price of the Northside Achievement Zone in North Minneapolis.

#### Consortium News

My Community-Engaged Scholars Program research project is titled “Future Family: Preventing the Reoccurrence of Unintended Pregnancies in Low-Income African American Families Through the Intersection of Education and Health.” The Future Family project aims to understand the effects of unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancies and their relationship to the academic achievement gap for low-income children of color in North Minneapolis. I will approach this issue by researching the unmet education and health needs surrounding family planning, pregnancy prevention, and access to contraception within the African American community living in a specific geographical area of North Minneapolis called the “Zone.”

Analyzing the practices and prevention methods used by families and health care providers within this community will lead to greater understanding of the cause of reoccurring unintended pregnancies in low-income African American families — pregnancies that can directly impact educational outcomes for the families' children and contribute to widening the academic achievement gap in this community.

Children living in areas of concentrated poverty are more likely to live with parents who struggle to meet their material needs. Thus, they are more likely to experience harmful levels of stress and more severe behavioral and emotional problems than children overall. As a result, students in schools in these communities score lower on standardized tests and are more likely to drop out of high school.<sup>1</sup> The risk of dropping out increases when there are several children in the household.

African American families in the Zone, a 13-by-18 block area in North Minneapolis, make up about 47 percent of the population and are at intense risk from crime, violence, and poverty. The Zone is home to an estimated 5,615 children and these numbers continue to grow at an rapid rate, without a drop in the poverty level. Research shows that low-income African American women have the highest unintended pregnancy rate among all racial and ethnic subgroups. Through community-based participatory research and partnership with Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ), a Promise Neighborhood working to end poverty in North Minneapolis through education, the Future Family project will be able to engage organizational affiliates and community members in all aspects of the research.

This project is in response to the growing number of NAZ families that have become pregnant within two years of giving birth or after having three or more children. Many mothers in these families say their pregnancies weren't planned. The Future Family project sets out to heighten awareness of unplanned pregnancies as an issue that poses adversity in African American families, as well as introduce families to organizations, such as NAZ, that have a vision to support and connect families to resources promoting parent involvement and academic success.

The Future Family study aims to eliminate some potent underlying causes of the achievement gap by focusing on family size and pregnancy prevention. Through the research, a framework will be created that elicits the best thinking in African American women and men regarding postponing additional pregnancies in order to concentrate on the education and development of the children currently in their household.

Motivational interviewing and problem solving methods will be used in this study to assist families in goal setting, assessing their living environment, and choosing a form of birth control that supports their long-term goals. In addition, the project aims to support community health care providers by gathering information that will help them present family planning options and initiate discussions about family planning with African American patients. The research results will give participating families and health care providers the tools to break down the barriers that avert positive health and educational outcomes in the Zone. Results will also help other African-American families who reside in neighborhoods at risk for poor health, teen pregnancy and infant mortality.

<sup>1</sup> Dell'Antonia, K. J. (2012, April 5). More children living (and lacking) in high-poverty areas. New York Times [online]. Retrieved from <http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/04/05/more-children-living-and-lacking-in-high-poverty-areas/>

About the author: Alysha Price, a trained motivational interviewer and health educator, is Family Academy Operations Manager at Northside Achievement Zone. She was previously on staff at the University of Minnesota Urban Outreach Engagement Center. Price holds a bachelor's degree in Human Services and Family Studies and a master's degree in Business Management. She is a North Minneapolis native who has worked for more than 20 years on eliminating education and health disparities in her community. Price is a recipient of the Minneapolis Award for outstanding commitment to community. Previously on staff at the University of Minnesota's Urban Outreach Engagement Center, she is currently the Family Academy Operations Manager at Northside Achievement Zone. Price is committed to creating lasting change as a community engaged scholar. Contact her [aprice@the-naz.org](mailto:aprice@the-naz.org).

Alysha Price  
CYFC Scholar

## University & Community Announcements

### **Sara Langworthy Named to National Steering Committee**

Sara Langworthy, CYFC Extension Educator, was recently elected to serve as the Early Career Representative to the University-Based Child and Family Policy (CFP) Consortium Steering Committee. With over 30 university-based centers and programs from across the country represented, the CFP Consortium fosters national collaboration on child and family policy issues. The CFP Consortium focuses on discussing relevant child and family research, providing career-focused cross-disciplinary opportunities and promoting effective communication between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. Currently, Sara is

working on a collaborative effort with other consortium members on the intersection of child welfare and education systems in Minnesota, North Carolina, and Illinois. [Find out more.](#)

### **Staff Research on Pinterest Published in JOE**

Sara Langworthy, along with Brianna Routh, former Extension Educator, and Hannah Jastram Aaberg, Extension Communications Associate, recently published “Pinterest for Parent Education” in the October 2014 issue of the Journal of Extension. [Read](#) recommendations for successfully developing and maintaining a Pinterest page for educational purposes.

### **Tell Us What You Think and Win \$50!**

We're looking for your feedback on the March 2013 eReview: [How trauma 'gets under the skin': Biological and cognitive processes of child maltreatment](#). Help make eReview more useful for your work. Read the issue just cited and learn about current research and implications for practice. Next visit <http://z.umn.edu/j0m> [no longer active] to fill out a short online survey by November 24 for a chance to win a \$50 gift card! Questions? Contact [Cari Michaels](#).

### **CYFC Staff to Speak at Mental Health Conference**

"Mental Health: Understanding and Supporting Families through the LifeSpan"

Sponsor: Minnesota Council on Family Relations

Date: December 5, 2014

Time: 7:30 a.m. - 4 p. m. (Central time)

Cost: \$50-\$110

Location: New Brighton Community Center and via video conference at regional Extension sites

CYFC Extension Educators Judy Myers and Cari Michaels, will present at a conference entitled “Mental Health: Understanding and Supporting Families Through the Lifespan” set for Monday, December 5 (see details above). Sponsored by the Minnesota Council on Family Relations, the conference is designed to share information and provide an opportunity for reflection to support professionals working with families. The conference also will feature Glenace Edwall of the Minnesota Department of Human Services. She will highlight ways lifespan developmental orientation and attention to the research literature on prevention and therapeutic intervention are being progressively incorporated into the state's approach to policy development and guidance for providing mental health services. Edwall holds doctorates in educational psychology from the University of Minnesota and in clinical psychology from the University of Denver. [Learn more.](#)

## **University & Community Conferences, Training, and Resources**

### **Three Day Intensive EMDR Training**

Sponsor: MHS DBT & Mental Health Services

Dates: January 21-23, 2015

Time: 8 a.m.-3:45 p.m.

Cost: \$449 before December 15; \$549 after

Location: Earle Brown Convention Center, 6155 Earle Brown Drive, Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

Linda Curran, author and international speaker on the treatment of trauma, will provide intensive training in EMDR (Eye Movement and Desensitization and Reprocessing) therapy that instructs clinicians on the principles of trauma theory, diagnosis, and treatment. Attendees will learn the biological nature of trauma,

symptoms, tools for treating trauma, and more. Curran holds advanced degrees in clinical psychology and public health. [Learn more and register for the training.](#)

### **Dilemmas in Youth Work Online**

Sponsor: Extension Center for Youth Development

Dates: February 16-March 20, 2015

Cost: \$100; receipt of 1.5 CEUs for an additional \$10

Location: Online (live webinars TBD)

Engage with an online community to learn ways to deal with the challenging situations professionals who work with youth (“youth workers”) encounter on a daily basis. Participants will explore dilemmas identified by youth workers in a national research study, learn the most current research on working with youth, and develop strategies for addressing issues in working with youth. Register here [no longer active] for this cohort-based professional development opportunity.

### **School Success Take and Teach Lessons**

Sponsor: Extension Center for Family Development

Dates: Available online now

The Extension Center for Family Development has developed “Take and Teach” lessons designed to help volunteers and professional educators facilitate discussions and activities with parents on how to better support their children’s education. Facilitators may present one or all nine lessons, which cover setting expectations, providing structure, modeling a respect for learning, and more. [Download the lessons here.](#)

## **Job Opportunities**

[The Children’s Mental Health Therapist I — People Incorporated](#)

Mental Health Professional — Wilder Foundation [no longer active]

[Supervisor, Case Management — Headway Emotional Health Services](#)

### **Follow CYFC**



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